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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 WARSAW 002381

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DEPT FOR EUR/NCE, EUR/ERA/ EUR/PRA, ISN/NESS
EUR/NCE FOR BPUTNEY AND TYEAGER
ISN/NESS FOR DFENSTERMACHER
DOE FOR PARRISH STAPLES, IGOR BOLSHINSKY, MIKE TYACKE, AND
BRIAN WAUD
VIENNA FOR UNVIE LHILLIARD

E.O. 12958: DECL: 12/17/2017
TAGS: [KNNP](#) [KTIA](#) [TRGY](#) [ENGR](#) [PARM](#) [PL](#)
SUBJECT: POLAND'S REACTOR FUEL RETURN PROGRAM: REACHING
CRITICAL MASS?

REF: A. STATE 70448
[1](#)B. WARSAW 1870

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Classified By: Acting EconCouns W. Anderson for reasons 1.4(b,d)

[1](#)1. (C) Summary: Poland's stalled reactor fuel return program may finally be getting underway, thanks to an executive order establishing a new inter-ministry coordinating group. However, the Poles estimate transferring their reactor fuel waste to Russia could take until 2016 or 2017, beyond the current program's end date. End summary.

[1](#)2. (SBU) Econoff met with Jerzy Niewodniczanski, president of Poland's National Atomic Energy Agency (NAEA), to discuss the status of the Russian Reactor Fuel Return program on December 4. Niewodniczanski, a respected scientist and administrator, has been a professor of physics, president of NAEA since 1992, and president of the 41st session of the International Atomic Energy Agency. Since November 14, he has been the chairman of an inter-ministry coordinating group to organize the nation's Russian Research Reactor Fuel Return Program (RRRFR) (Reftel A).

[1](#)3. (SBU) Poland's participation in the RRRFR was proposed in a letter from Andrew Bieniawski of the Department of Energy on December 5, 2006. Embassy Warsaw followed with a Diplomatic Note proposing Poland's participation in RRRFR. Since then, the program has languished in a state of bureaucratic oblivion. Neither Bieniawski's letter or the Diplomatic Note have ever received a response. While GOP officials have repeatedly told Embassy Warsaw representatives that they want Poland to participate, no one has been willing to sign a document committing the GOP to a course of action (Reftel B).

[1](#)4. (SBU) Two days before leaving office, on November 14, Jaroslaw Kaczynski issued an order creating the inter-ministry coordinating group. The order specified that the president of the NAEA would be, ex officio, the group's chairman, and

the Ministries of Finance, Economy, Foreign Affairs, Transportation, and State Treasury would each designate a committee member. In addition, the order calls for the chairman to name a non-voting secretary. The working group's authorization expires on March 31, 2011, according to the order.

15. (C) Niewodniczanski began the meeting by apologizing profusely for the GOP's delay in responding to Bieniawski's letter and the Diplomatic Note. He attributed the delay to bureaucratic inefficiency in determining which agency was competent to sign the responses. Niewodniczanski indicated his interest in convening the coordinating group and moving the program forward, and said the group's first meeting would be held the week of December 10. So far, however, only one ministry has named its representative. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) designated Tadeusz Chomicki. Currently the deputy director of the Security Policy Department of MFA, responsible for disarmament, nonproliferation, export controls, and defense industry cooperation, Chomicki has also served as Poland's ambassador to the Republic of Korea. Niewodniczanski said he was considering appointing a representative from the GOP's Radioactive Waste Management Plant (RWMP), which has possession of the reactor fuel waste, to serve as the non-voting secretary.

16. (C) Niewodniczanski said that he was leaning toward transferring the reactor fuel waste by ship from Poland to either St. Petersburg or Murmansk in Russia, because of problems negotiating land transportation agreements with either Ukraine or Belarus. He said he would be consulting with the staff of RWMP to work on technical details while awaiting approval of the final implementing agreement. Niewodniczanski estimated that the project could be completed, barring unforeseen difficulties, by 2016 or 2017, which is beyond the current program deadline of 2013.

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